Strategy Research Project

BRIDGING THE CULTURAL COMMUNICATION GAP BETWEEN AMERICA AND ITS ARMY
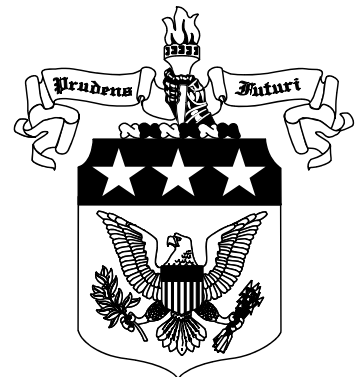
BY

MS. BOBBIE GALFORD
Department of Army Civilian

USAWC CLASS OF 2008

U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013-5050

		Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188

Report Documentation Page

1. REPORT DATE **15 MAR 2008**	2. REPORT TYPE **Strategy Research Project**	3. DATES COVERED **00-00-2007 to 00-00-2008**
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE **Bridging the Cultural Communication Gap Between America and Its Army**		5a. CONTRACT NUMBER
		5b. GRANT NUMBER
		5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER
6. AUTHOR(S) **Bobbie Galford**		5d. PROJECT NUMBER
		5e. TASK NUMBER
		5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) **U.S. Army War College ,122 Forbes Ave.,Carlisle,PA,17013-5220**		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)		10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)
		11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for public release; distribution unlimited

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

14. ABSTRACT
See attached

15. SUBJECT TERMS

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT **unclassified**	b. ABSTRACT **unclassified**	c. THIS PAGE **unclassified**	**Same as Report (SAR)**	**32**	

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98)
Prescribed by ANSI Std Z39-18

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

BRIDGING THE CULTURAL COMMUNICATION GAP BETWEEN AMERICA AND ITS ARMY

by

Ms. Bobbie Galford
Department of Army Civilian

Mr. Dennis Murphy
Project Adviser

U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

ABSTRACT

The U.S. Army continues to play a crucial role in the defense and security of the United States. Throughout history, the nation has asked its citizens to serve and support the country in times of peace and peril. Over the years, American culture, society and the U.S. Army have changed in response to a transforming world. This transformation has resulted in an altered relationship between the public and the military, and has served to broaden the communication gap between America and its Army. The differing attitudes and culture between the two has the potential to affect national policy and weaken U.S. security and stability. Recognizing and understanding this chasm is the first step in developing strategic communication initiatives to inform and educate the public about the need for a strong Army and to improve communication between the Army and society. Strengthening relationships between the military and the public will be essential if the Army is to continue to play a vital role in the defense of our nation.

BRIDGING THE CULTURAL COMMUNICATION GAP BETWEEN AMERICA AND ITS ARMY

<u>A Distinguished Past</u>

For more than 232 years the United States Army has demonstrated a rich and proud heritage in defending America's homeland and serving U.S. national interests overseas as directed. From the Revolutionary War to today's global war on terror, through peace and conflict, the Army has prevailed in the numerous missions it has been directed to conduct. U.S. soldiers have achieved success throughout the years conducting worldwide operations such as humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, peacekeeping and nation building while continuing to perform their primary warfighter role.

"Our nonnegotiable contract with the American people is to fight and win the nation's wars. Every other task is subordinate to that commitment. To discharge our responsibilities to the nation, we maintain several core competencies. These are essential and enduring capabilities of our service. They encompass the full range of military operations across the spectrum of conflict, from sustained land dominance in wartime to supporting civil authorities during natural disasters and consequence management."[1]

Through times of triumph and tragedy, the service has been fortunate to have young men, and later women, of all segments of society fill its ranks in service to this nation. It is in large part because of these patriots, some of whom volunteered and others who were conscripted, many who served as career soldiers while others served only one tour of duty, that the United States stands today as the world's only military superpower. "To be ready for whatever comes in the future, if we are to remain the

indispensable nation, we must have an effective and efficient military."[2] A strong Army will continue to play an integral role in the continued safety, well-being and success of our country.

Over the past decades, much of the American public has had a clear understanding of the U.S. Army and its purpose, values, roles and missions. This is due primarily to the personal relationships forged between U.S. soldiers and American citizens occurring over the years throughout the United States. The Army is composed of a diverse mix of backgrounds representative of small towns to large cities in all regions of the country. It has provided a calling to Americans who have been both financially prosperous and poor and to college educated individuals as well as high school dropouts. And later in its history, the Army afforded opportunities to all ethnic groups and to both men and women who desired to serve. Until recently, almost everyone, in all segments of the American society, served with the Army or had a family member, educator, member of clergy, colleague or a friend join the Army's ranks either voluntarily or through a draft. Even during times when the American public disagreed with political decisions directly affecting the military or was disgraced by controversial events or actions involving Army troops, the vast majority of Americans still possessed a solid foundation and understanding of the need and reason for an Army. However, public attitudes toward the military since World War I have gradually eroded. "During both world wars the American public and media were extremely supportive of the military. In contrast, support was much less evident during the Korean War and, especially, during the Vietnam War. Yet, during the Cold War or Late Modern era,

public attitudes were generally supportive of the military as an institution and of its budgetary demands, although there was some erosion of that support."[3]

Today the United States is a far different place. American culture, society and the Army as an institution have changed in response to a transforming world. As globalization evolved, the relationship between the public and the military changed and the communication gap between America and its Army widened. Two "overarching reasons" for this phenomenon are lack of military understanding by American elites because the Army has been a volunteer force for more than 30 years, and the establishment of a large peacetime military which has created a U.S. military garrison environment. This allowed the military to become self-contained and distinct from society.[4]   "We need to reconnect with the American people," Maj. Gen. John G. Meyers, former Chief of Army Public Affairs, said.[5]

A thorough examination of the culture of the United States Army and the trends and opinions of Americans no longer closely associated or linked with the Army is necessary to provide an analysis of how a lack of communication leads to misunderstanding, misinformation and apathy which, in turn, negatively affects Army recruitment, retention, funding and credibility. Tom Ricks, in his book, *Making of the Corps,* asserts that the gap between the military and the society it serves is made worse by the public's new ignorance of military affairs.[6]

In order to continue to have a strong, vital institution essential in maintaining America's future as a world power, the U.S. Army will be required to bridge the cultural communication gap between America and its Army. To effectively bridge this crevice, the Army will need to, at a minimum, understand the primary issues creating the gap

and then develop and execute varied strategic communication initiatives to affect the breach. "Vitally important, strategic communication means persuading the nation's citizens to support the policies of their leaders so that a national will is forged to accomplish national objectives."[7] Achieving this goal will require Army leadership to continue to engage the American public, but to do so in different, creative and innovative ways. Programs and projects deemed effective today in meeting the Army's communication challenges should be continued and improved, but our leaders must continually think more strategically and creatively to develop future communication methodologies that are effective and timely. Since military effectiveness is improved by an Army supported by its wider society,[8] the U.S. Army will need the continued moral support, funding, and human capital of the nation to remain relevant.

The American public's lack of knowledge and awareness about the Army and general apathy toward our soldiers can be examined through the study of the potential future force, the composition of the current Army, the limited political and business elite association and involvement with the military, and the changing roles and missions of the United States Army.

Responsibilities and Challenges

The U.S. Constitution directs Congress to raise and support armies. Subsequently, Title 10 of the U.S. Code gives the Army the responsibility to organize, train and equip. The Army provides trained forces to the Combatant Commanders for use as they see fit. The United States discontinued using the draft to fill the ranks of its military services in 1972. Since that time, the Army has relied on recruiting an all-volunteer force. In the *2007 Posture Statement*, the Army lists "growing the all-

volunteer force to sustain the long war" as one of its "core objectives which the Army must achieve."[9] The *Posture Statement* goes on to devote an addendum to the recruitment and retention of the all-volunteer force, stating that sustaining the all-volunteer force is a "fundamental strategic objective for the Army, that serves as a vital investment in the future security of our nation."[10]

Recruiting and sustaining an all-volunteer force is a critical task for the Army but continues to be a challenge for the U.S. Army Accessions Command. The first challenge is that of sheer numbers. American families today are smaller than ever before and there are fewer youth. Only 3.35 million American's turned 18 in 1994, making it the lowest figure since 1964.[11]   Increases in employment opportunities, improvements in the economy, more access to colleges and universities, and heightened negative public attitudes toward the global war on terror all hinder the number of individuals within the Army's primary recruiting market (17-24 year old males) interested in a tour or career with the U.S. Army. "Only about one in nine (11%) teens indicate that they have a "great deal" of interest in serving their country in a military capacity. Just 6% of girls say they have a great deal of interest in serving in the military, versus 15% of boys."[12] This target market, also known as Generation Y, has different norms, beliefs and aspirations than the recruiting target markets in the past. "They are more numerous, more affluent, better educated and more ethically diverse. More important, they are beginning to manifest a wide array of positive social habits that older Americans no longer associate with youth, including a new focus on teamwork, achievement, modesty and good conduct."[13]

It is essential that Army leadership strategically evaluate and grasp the culture of Generation Y in order to know what values and beliefs are important to potential recruits. According to a *Business Week* cover story Feb. 15, 1999, marketing to the members of Generation Y is an entirely new game. This group, born between 1979 and 1994 are 60 million strong and view life differently than those generations that came before them. They are pragmatic and respect and respond to truth, irony and humor. "Along with cynicism, Gen Y is marked by a distinctly practical world view, say marketing experts."[14]

Parental positive influence in a teen's decision to join the military has also eroded since U.S. involvement in the Second Persian Gulf War. A 2005 poll "asked Americans how they would react if they had a son or daughter who was planning to enter the military. Fifty-one percent say they would support that step, while 48% would suggest a different occupation. When *The Associated Press* asked the same question in 1999, 66% of Americans said they would support their child's decision, while only 29% would suggest their child try something else."[15]

Waning numbers of the Army's target market, a decrease in the propensity to enlist and the erosion of influencer support are not the only difficult issues recruiters face today. Many of those interested in serving in the U.S. Army simply are not qualified.

According the Army's *Posture Statement* only "45 % of the primary recruiting market is "potentially fully qualified or require a waiver, and only 29 % are potentially full qualified" for Army enlistment.[16] The Army competes with all of the other services in recruiting from this small group of candidates.

In addition to examining demographic trends used by the Army to recruit a new force, it is also helpful to study the tendencies and views of those already serving in the service in relation to retention. The attitudes and opinions of those currently serving, both in the enlisted and officer corps, have the ability to affect the relationship between the military and society, both positively and negatively.

"Almost 600,000 soldiers are on active duty today, (currently 507,000 active component, 46,000 Army National Guard and 28,000 Army Reserve). Over 40 % (243,000) of them are deployed or forward stationed, serving in 76 countries worldwide."[17] Many of these soldiers are serving on their second or third deployment tour and some have had their tours extended in support of the U.S. military strategy. In addition to being unhappy with increased and extended combat deployments, many of those in uniform are becoming increasingly critical of their military and political leadership and are more and more skeptical of the American public support for the troops in this war. "Many returning veterans have expressed doubts that the public supports their service and noted that the public does not have to make any sacrifice of its own. Any number of OIF vets have admitted a degree of annoyance that while they were serving overseas, the American people were out shopping."[18] Trust within the Army officer corps, especially between junior officers and their superiors, has led to a shortage of Army captains because of the number of officers leaving each year. "A recent *New York Times* article cited a young officer saying, 'Senior leaders will throw subordinates under the bus in a heartbeat to protect or advance their own career[s].'"[19] Soldiers are sharing their opinions with the public through the media, but more importantly with their decisions to leave the military service at the end of their tours.

According to recent U.S. census figures, the American population is now more diverse than anytime in history. "This is especially true for the labor force, where the influx of women and racial minorities represents one of the most profound changes in the American workforce in recent years. By 2025, the labor force is expected to be 48% women and 36% minority. In addition, there is increasing diversity among the college and college-bound population."[20]

Although the U.S. Army has made gains over the past several years in the recruitment of women and minorities, the organization's diversity is still not truly representative of American society. Although unrealistic to believe that half of the Army's troops will be female any time soon, it is essential that the Army continually evaluate opportunities within the service where women may be able to serve and open those positions to qualified females. Military occupational specialties currently closed to women, currently 9%, which constitutes 30% of all active duty positions[21] need to be routinely reviewed to determine if they really should be gender specific.

Culture and Demographics

In several ways, the culture of the United States Army has evolved, transforming many of its previous beliefs and assumptions just as the culture of the rest of the nation has evolved. The U.S. Army has recognized and responded to the need for soldiers to be better educated, better trained, more technical, innovative, agile and flexible. "Perhaps because the Army has existed long enough to have been repeatedly, and sometimes brutally, forced to reexamine its role in national defense, self-reflection and analysis are vital components of Army culture," General Peter Schoomaker, former

Army Chief of Staff, said. "We must be prepared to question everything in endorsing innovation and culture change in the Army."[22]

The changing and expanding role of the U.S. Army institution since the end of the Cold War has contributed to the lack of communication between the Army and society. The smaller, limited conflicts the United States has been involved in since the end of the Cold War required a changed Army that could deploy equipment and personnel rapidly to fight a different type of enemy. The capability necessary for the traditional role of land power assets is no longer the Army's focal point. The Army is transforming to meet the new world challenges, but those changes are occurring slowly and not without some angst and frustration throughout the organization. Transforming an entire institution, which involves changing doctrine, plans, equipment, training, structure and personnel to meet new requirements and multiple missions, also requires organizational culture transformation that can lead to communication barriers. Understanding the organizational culture is essential to make effective and lasting change and to effectively communicate the changes, requirements and new roles and missions to both internal and external audiences.

Per Edgar Schein's model of organizational culture, "culture is not a single belief or assumption, it is a set of interrelated (but not necessarily consistent) beliefs and assumptions." Schein continues to explain that "the members of a culture hold values and conform to cultural norms because their underlying beliefs and assumptions nurture and support these norms and values."[23] John A. Nagl, in Chapter 9 of *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* defines organizational culture as a "persistent, patterned way of thinking about the central tasks

of and human relationships within an organization."[24] If Army leadership concurs with

these theories of culture, it is imperative for leadership to examine, evaluate, and

understand the specific culture of the Army and to be prepared to reform the culture if

necessary to maintain the health of the organization. Leaders need to comprehend

core values, beliefs, assumptions and norms in order to influence the organization. They

also need to understand the current culture and trends of our society in order better

relate to the American public and to ensure the nation's youth consider the U.S. Army

as both a viable employment option and an important and necessary defense entity.

Being a change agent, being prepared for turmoil and having the determination to

see the change process through must be a personal priority for senior leadership.

Leaders will need to demonstrate interpersonal, conceptual and technical skills to

develop and implement the vision and strategies to sustain an innovative, agile and

ethical army within a diverse, multicultural environment. Leaders will need charisma

and influence. They must possess values and ethics, and lead by example to affect

culture. They need to be visionary and see the future more clearly than most. They

need to view the environment as it could and should be, develop the strategy to lead the

organization there and anticipate challenges to the vision. And finally, strategic leaders

need to have formal and informal training, be extremely knowledgeable about the

organization and situation, and have the ability to communicate, negotiate and build

consensus. In short, leaders need to be able to "lead, develop and achieve results."[25]

Changing an organizational culture doesn't necessarily result in the eroding of the

organization's ethics and values. To the contrary, having a solid ethical foundation will

help the organization weather the difficulties associated with the change by providing

guiding principles for the entire organization. Senior leaders will best serve the organization by living and demonstrating those values and ethics to those they command and by providing the moral compass to their subordinates.

Significant changes to the organizational culture may lead to changes in the Army as a profession. Three culprits serving to widen the gap between the military and the civilian society are the military's inability "to adapt its expert knowledge to its new circumstances, officers who believe the values of the military institution were not just different from, but also in several respects better than, those of the society they are protecting, and repeated and well-publicized ethical violations by Army leaders."[26] Changes to the institutional organization as a whole must be evaluated in regard to the soldiers it affects and measures taken in terms of education and training to limit communication problems. The potential effects to the Army profession because of transformation should be anticipated and planned for by Army leaders. Recruiting and training a more diverse force to respond to new and different missions requires more diverse and better prepared leaders. Recruiting more diversity will result in the U.S. Army being more adaptive to new global challenges and more reflective of the society it serves. This will only help in bridging any barriers or gaps that currently exist between the two.

The military still holds fast to many of its norms and values from earlier times. Because of the nature and role of the Army, many of these beliefs and customs are still valid, appropriate and useful. Others should be examined in relation to the values and norms of our civilian society.

The Army is not reflective of the society it represents in relation to regional representation, affluence, education, sexual orientation and gender equality. Today, the South is overrepresented by about eight percent in enlisted accessions each year. In 1996, the South had only 15.4 % of U.S. population, but 31.5 % of military personnel.[27]

The Army recruits more individuals from society's working class and from the poor than from the nation's affluent families. "It is a demographic fact that fewer and fewer of our civilian elites have military service, or that their children are liable to serve in the armed forces."[28] According to a study by the National Priorities Project, more recruits come from families making less than $60,000 annually than those families with higher incomes.[29]

The U.S. Army continues to oppose gays serving in the military and women serving in combat roles even though both issues are fully supported by society. "A December 2003 Gallup poll showed that 79% of Americans believe that gay men and lesbians should be allowed to serve openly in the military. Over 90% of respondents aged 18-29 agreed that people who are openly gay or lesbian should be allowed to serve in the Armed Forces. More than 80% of those polled think women should either be required to serve in the same combat assignments as men, or should at least have the opportunity to do so."[30]

The U.S. military tends to be traditional, formal and authoritarian. "Unity, self-discipline, sacrifice and placing interests of the group over the individual," have been described as "classic military values."[31] Many members of the Army are also far more conservative in religious and social attitudes and opinions than their civilian counterparts. "It is clear that on certain issues with a religious dimension, such as

12

tolerance of differences in sexual orientation, the views of some military members diverge from those of the population as a whole."[32] Additionally, there are apparent political differences between those serving in the Army and the public. More and more officers, both junior and senior, are identifying themselves as conservative. More military members identify themselves as Republicans more often than do Americans in the aggregate.[33]

In contrast, primary characteristics of the American culture identified by Richard D. Lewis in *When Cultures Collide*, include individualism, informality, risk oriented, opportunistic, blunt, and competitive.[34] These traits are at odds with the military's need for discipline, order and unity of command. Although most crucial on the battlefield, these attributes need to be standard throughout the Army. If these characteristics are not evident throughout all military rank, risk exists to individual soldiers, the Army and the nation. The Army will need to compromise on the individual traits it accepts from incoming recruits while at the same time developing comprehensive training to inculcate the Army's values and norms into the new workforce.

Understanding the Army's own culture and composition, as well as that of our larger society, and being prepared to take actions that closer merge the two will be critical to senior Army leaders who hope to bridge the cultural communication gap.

Recent polling results demonstrate the American public has a high degree of confidence in its military. "In 1975, a Harris Poll reported that only 20% of people ages 18 to 29 said they had a great deal of confidence in those who ran the military. A recent poll by the Harvard Institute of Politics, however, found that 70% of college undergraduates trust the military to do the right thing either all or most of the time."[35] A

2005 Gallup Poll indicates the majority of our society places more trust in its uniformed services than in that of Congress, the clergy, media and the U.S. Supreme Court. "Only three U.S. institutions out of the 15 included in the May 23-26 poll command a high degree of confidence from at least half of Americans: the military, the police, and the church or organized religion. The 74% rating given to the military continues to make it the institution engendering the most confidence of any of those tested -- and by a healthy margin."[36]

And yet even with the aggregate polling information, it appears individually that the American view of the military has declined. Don Snyder and Gail Watkins, in their article, *The Future of Army Professionalism: A Need For Renewal and Redefinition,* posit that "recruiting shortfalls, a widening difference in values in perspectives between Americans serving in our Armed Forces, including the Army, and the society they serve, and repeated and well-publicized ethical violations by Army leaders" are issues that indicate a gap between the Army and the public they serve.[37] On one hand, statistics show Americans have faith and confidence in those sworn to protect and defend our nation. On the other hand, this trust does not translate to a significant increase in America's sons and daughters joining the Army, increased military funding or a lack of skepticism and cynicism about the quality and morality of U.S. soldiers in response to scandals and negative media accounts.

Civilian Elite and Political Leadership

The same lack of understanding found between the Army and the general public is also evident in the relationship between the Army and corporate and political leaders. Today, fewer and fewer members of our elected democratic government as well as our

civilian elite have any direct knowledge of the Army as an institution. Most members of

Congress have not served in the military nor have they fostered those close, personal

relationships with individuals who have. "Only 24 % of today's members of Congress

have military service, and far fewer have any combat experience. Fewer congressmen

have family members serving in the armed forces. At the beginning of the war [Second

Persian Gulf War], only one member of the Senate or House had a child serving: six

years later the total stands at three."[38] This disturbing trend could have significant

impact on the U.S. Army far beyond simply a lack of understanding between the two

institutions. Congress provides funding for the Armed Forces. If they do not

understand the need for and the requirements of the Army, it is very likely the Army will

not receive adequate financial support needed to conduct recruitment and training and

for equipping the force. A communication breakdown between policymakers and the

Army could lead to poor national security decisions that may ultimately send American

service men and women unnecessarily into harm's way or harm international relations.

Our political leaders are not the only significant members of society without a solid

understanding of our military. America's civilian elite, many of whom are the country's

corporate business leaders, play a vital role in emerging national priorities through

economics, status, access and lobbying and yet fewer and fewer individuals from our

society's middle and upper classes have any direct knowledge of the military. Those

civilian leaders who are unaware or uninformed of the role, mission and needs of the

Army, may at best be apathetic toward the military. Worse, they may intentionally

oppose the Army. Due to their status within the communities and government, this

could lead to lack of funding or the implementation of poor policies. Peter A.

Gudmundsson opines in an article published in the Christian Science Monitor that veterans better understand the military, thus better representing society. "A society with veterans represented at all levels of the community is better equipped to interpret accounts of inadvertent civilian casualties, interrogation interpreted as torture, or prisoner abuse. With the abdication of the upper classes from military service, most elites in the media, private sector and government service don't have the intimate human context for the realities of war."[39]

Strategic Communication Initiatives

The U.S. Army needs to enhance its strategic communication efforts and reexamine its relationship with the media in an effort to improve communications with the United States public. In too many instances the Army has considered the media as something it had to deal with in a negative environment instead of viewing the media as an opportunity to multiply and maximize its efforts to communicate to the American public. Scandals and bad news stories are going to continue to occur within the Army and with enhanced technology and 24-hour news cycles, the Army can be certain there will be reporters on the scene. But instead of focusing the majority of its efforts responding to negative news stories, the Army should focus its efforts on developing relationships with reporters, editors, on-air personalities and bloggers and in developing strategic and operational communication and information campaigns as an integral part of our military and political planning. To better connect with American society, the Army needs to engage the media, not just deal with it.

Transformation is necessary if the Army is to bridge the civil-military gap existing between the Army culture and society and continue to recruit and retain an educated

and professional all-volunteer force. Developing strategic communication initiatives and employing them throughout all levels of the Army will be required. Additionally, options deemed off the table for consideration in the past to include allowing women in combat, homosexuals to serve openly and reinstating the draft, need to be reevaluated and examined for merit and validity from the perspective of our changing cultural environment as well as from the Army's need to maintain and improve our institutional Army.

Just like providing everything necessary for the U.S. Infantry to fight and win our nation's wars during conflict, the Army must make a commitment to develop a program, raise a staff, and provide training and equipment for a strategic communication office if it is to win the cultural communication war in between the military and society.

> New institutions are needed for the 21st century, new organizations with a 21st century mind-set. For example, public relations was invented in the United States, yet we are miserable at communicating to the rest of the world what we are about as a society and a culture, about freedom and democracy, about our policies and our goals. It is just plain embarrassing that al-Qaeda is better at communicating its message on the internet than America. As one foreign diplomat asked a couple of years ago, 'How has one man in a cave managed to out-communicate the world's greatest communication society?' Speed, agility, and cultural relevance are not terms that come readily to mind when discussing U.S. strategic communications.[40]

Establishing a Strategic Communication Office (SCO) at Department of the Army would be an ideal starting point. The goal of this office would be to develop strategic messages, identify audiences, and measure message effectiveness. The SCO would rely on elements of the rest of the Army to include Public Affairs, Legislative Liaison, Speechwriting Staff and Recruiting Command's Advertising and Marketing team to meet its objectives, but more importantly to assist with message deployment. "The most difficult part of strategic communication is finding a means to get the message to the

intended audiences. Not only is that difficult in itself, but the sender must cut through all the static, clutter, and competing messages flooding the scene. This solution is straightforward even if complicated – use every channel possible and as many as possible."[41]

The key to the success of the Strategic Communications Office is to have enough power or influence to ensure the commitment and participation of the entire Army. Army senior leaders must be personally involved to ensure the Army's priorities are properly and fully communicated to internal and external audiences. Messages need to be developed from the organization's core values. They must be pertinent, concise, resonate with audiences and be meaningful and appropriate for use by all Army elements to include National Guard, Reserve and the Civilian Corps. And effective messages will need to be developed, staffed and deployed decisively and quickly. As message development involves more than simply words, it is imperative that the Army focus on actions as well. The SCO will need to coordinate closely and provide strategic guidance and themes for all elements of Army marketing programs to include the U.S. Army Bands, The Golden Knights, The 82nd Airborne Chorus, The Old Guard, and The Army Marksmanship Team. Information should be coordinated and synchronized to achieve maximum effect, but the execution should continue to be decentralized.

Since recruiting quality and quantity individuals to serve in the U.S. Army is and will remain a strategic challenge, it is imperative that Army leadership personally be involved in planning for the future composition of the Army. Leadership engagement will provide the strategic vision necessary for the organization to successfully meet and exceed its recruiting challenges. Changes to Army recruiting resulting in impacts on the

Army culture, climate, ethics and profession should be anticipated and planned for to develop the most effective path ahead.

Currently, the U.S. Army Recruiting initiatives, programs and incentives targeted at the 17-24 year-old market have allowed the Army to meet its annual recruiting goals. The advertising, information and marketing campaigns conducted by the Army's advertising agency and Accession Command are well researched, developed and executed for this target audience. Inducements such as the Army College Fund have been and continue to be the only option for many individuals to obtain a college degree. As such, the program has been a highly successful initiative. Flexible options that allow today's youth to continue to use this program should continue to be examined and extended. Recent enlistment bonuses and enticement programs such as money for homebuyers are creative and beneficial initiatives that of interest to recent high school graduates as well as older, eligible potential recruits. The Army should also consider expanding Junior ROTC and ROTC programs in high schools and colleges to further encourage youth of the benefits of the Army.

The Army needs to spend more time and resources influencing two additional markets in order to maximize overall recruiting efforts. The first is centers of influence or the parents, coaches and educators market. The goal is not necessarily to have this segment actively promote the Army as a career to the target market, but instead to provide them with enough information, knowledge and comfort level of the organization so that they will not discourage teens who are considering enlistment from joining. The Army should continue its advertising campaign directed at this group, but additionally, should expand its outreach efforts. One-on-one contact is essential and Recruiting

Command and other Army leaders should engage local community organizations as much as possible. Providing guest speakers for civic group events, and actively participating in community functions and activities will assist in this effort. Programs to reach educators, guidance counselors and high school coaches throughout the United States should continue to expand. In underrepresented areas that have little contact with the active duty Army, this group should be taken to Army installations for tours, briefings and to see basic training firsthand.

The second population the Army needs to concentrate its efforts on is junior high and middle school aged children. This should not be done from a recruiting perspective but more as a way to assist with education, mentoring and physical fitness programs. The Army should work with school systems and administrators to develop a collaborative campaign to further assist students. Fewer and fewer schools are teaching military history. Adolescents are experimenting with alcohol, tobacco and drugs at younger ages, many before they are 13 years old. A Center for Disease Control (CDC) study asserts that every day there are approximately 4,000 children, aged 12-17 years, old who smoke their first cigarette. The CDC also warns of the number of children whose health is at risk because of weight and inactivity issues.[42] If the Army wants to better connect with the society it protects, then it needs to be directly involved in community solutions. It won't be an easy or quick fix, but should be incorporated to improve communication with the American public. "Winning hearts, minds, trust and credibility, in the end, requires a local approach."[43]

Ultimately, if the Army is serious about creating an organization more in tune with those it represents while continuing to meet its recruiting challenges, it needs to work to

change laws and regulations in order to expand its recruiting pool to all qualified applicants for all positions regardless of gender or sexual orientation.

Allowing homosexuals to serve openly and allowing female soldiers who are physically qualified to serve in combat roles would leverage diversity. "Leveraging of diversity, or capitalizing on diversity, means turning diversity into an advantage by using it to enhance performance and social legitimacy."[44] If the Army is serious about recruiting youth from Generation Y, it needs to prove it is an organization reflective of society and open to those with different beliefs, ideas and opinions. "The attitudes of younger American's in general and high school students in particular are especially relevant to the future military, because today's high school students represent the Army's major recruiting pool and its source of future officers, and represent as well the nation's future civilian leaders, policy-makers, and voters."[45]

Additionally, it is unlikely in the long run for these types of changes to degrade military effectiveness or negatively affect cohesion or ultimately performance. "The evidence for a relationship between cohesion and group performance shows that it is task cohesion, not social cohesion, that is related to success."[46]

This option is bound to be a tough sell for many both inside and outside of the military. However, integrating African-Americans and women into the Armed Forces proved to be a controversial initiative in its infancy as well. Leaders charged with the organizational changes faced cultural and climate issues as those reforms challenged long-held Army beliefs and traditions. Because of leadership vision, strategy and willingness to stand behind the changes and lead by example, the transformations occurred and made the Army a better organization that is more reflective of the society

it serves. These developments profoundly changed the culture and the climate of the organization and prove significant changes to an institution's culture can be accomplished. "At a time of stark tensions and continuing separation between the races, not only is the Army a thoroughly integrated institution, its members seem at peace with the idea."[47]

Establishing improved communication with our political leaders will take a robust, well trained legislative liaison office that not only responds to Congressional questions and requests, but improves outreach programs to legislators that explain, inform and demonstrate the Army's roles, missions and capabilities. This should be done in coordination with the messages and guidance from the proposed SCO, so that the Army speaks with one voice. This could be accomplished through continued efforts to incorporate one-on-one meetings, briefings, office visits, testimony, information papers and reports, and through a Distinguished Visitor Program to Army installations where political leadership see Army training and meet soldiers. More soldiers and Department of the Army civilians should be afforded the opportunity to participate in the Army's Congressional Fellows program where they are afforded the opportunity to work in a Congressional staff office to learn more about the legislative process. This increases knowledge and understanding for both the soldier and DA civilian as well as for Congressional staffers and members. It also serves to develop relationships and improve communication processes between the two organizations. In addition to sending Army assets to work on the Hill, a program to embed Congressional staffers into Army staff offices should also be implemented in order to give these individuals a better understanding and education of the military. Although not a quick fix, a

comprehensive plan to better inform political leaders about the Army is essential in bridging the cultural communication gap between the two institutions.

The Army would also be well served to conduct an educational outreach campaign targeted at U.S. Chief Executive Officers and state and local political leadership. Armed with strategic themes and messages, the Civilian Aides to the Secretary of the Army (CASAs) and the Army's retired general officers could be instrumental in serving as liaisons to various groups of influencers throughout the country.

Army leaders throughout the organization need to do a better job of encouraging two-way communication and open dialogue within the Army. Senior leaders should strive for a culture of innovation within their organizations. "A culture of innovation is typified by an environment within which every single person in the organization is invested in the organization's success and feels a responsibility to implement new and better ways to achieve organizational objectives."[48] Although junior leaders and young enlistees need to be cognizant of the Army's culture, chain of command and need for good discipline and order, senior leaders need to be more aware and responsive to Generation Y's culture and preferred communication styles. Implementing or continuing to teach diversity and communication training throughout the Army will assist in garnering improved communication.

The Army needs to find ways to reduce bureaucracy, which should help improve communication when it comes to implementing change. The communication issues related to transforming the entire institution's roles and missions since the end of the Cold War have been hindered because of the lack of creative thinking and the reluctance of some in the process to change the way we do business. The Army must

demonstrate learning organization behavior in order to grow and thrive. "Learning organizations are organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together."[49]

Conclusion

A divide between the U.S. Army and the American public it serves currently exists. Concerns that the gap continues to widen are real and tangible. As the world evolves, more and more U.S. citizens have less direct contact or knowledge about soldiers, the Army or the military in general. Those who comprise the Army are more educated, more politicized and find themselves more isolated from many of those segments of society they have sworn an oath to protect and defend. Many in the military view themselves not just different from society, but better.

In *The Art of War,* Sun Tzu contends that by knowing your enemy and yourself, you will avoid peril.[50] The U.S. Army's enemy is not the American public. It is the inability to understand and engage a changing culture and to develop a strategic roadmap to effectively communicate to target audiences about the role, mission and need for an Army. To be successful, the Army will need to improve efforts to be a learning and changing organization. To thrive, and not simply to survive, will require the Army be flexible enough to move away from many traditional ways of doing business, take more risks and find innovative means to market and explain itself. This transformation must begin with Army leadership. A primary and important role of strategic Army leaders, is taking responsibility for bridging the cultural communication

gap between the American public and the Army. This will be an ongoing effort requiring

constant attention and due patience and the Army will need to make strategic

communication initiatives a priority in order to really affect the environment.

Strengthening relationships between the military and the public, educating and

informing society of the role and need for the U.S. Army, and recruiting soldiers who are

reflective of the society we live in will be essential if the Army is to continue to play a

vital role in the defense of this nation.

<u>Endnotes</u>

[1] U.S. Department of the Army, *The Army*, Army Field Manual 1 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, 14 June 2001), 32.

[2] The Honorable Ike Shelton (D-MO), "Skelton Delivers Address at Historic Westminster College" press release, 3 April 2007, in U.S. Army War College, AY2008 National Security Policy and Strategy Course (Carlisle Barracks: U.S. Army War College, 2007), 31.

[3] Charles C. Moskos, John Allen Williams, and David R. Segal, *The Postmodern Military, Armed Forces after the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 19-20.

[4] Thomas E. Ricks, *Making of the Corps* (New York: Scribner, 1997), 274-275.

[5] Michal J. Burbach, *Public affairs into the 21st Century,* Strategy Research Project (Carlisle Barracks: U.S. Army War College, 29 April 1999).

[6] Ricks, 23.

[7] Richard Halloran, "Strategic Communication," *Parameters* 37 (Autumn 2007): 6.

[8] Mady Wechsler Segal and Chris Bourg, "Professional Leadership and Diversity in the Army," in Lloyd J. Mattews, ed., *The Future of the Army Profession,* 2nd ed., rev. and exp. (McGraw-Hill Custom Publishing, 2005), 705.

[9] Francis J. Harvey and Peter J. Schoomaker, *Call to Duty, Boots on the Ground A Statement on the Posture of the United States Army, Fiscal Year 2007,* Posture Statement presented to the 110th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, 2007), ii.

[10] Ibid., C-1.

[11] Thomas S. Langston, "The Civilian Side of Military Culture," *Parameters* 30 (Autumn 2000): 25.

[12] Linda Lyons, "Teen Views on War, Military Service, Education and Youth," *The Gallup Poll,* 11 March 2003, [article on-line]; available from http://www.gallup.com/poll/7966/Teen-Views-War-Military-Service.aspx; Internet; accessed 11 December 2007.

[13] Neil Howe and William Strauss, *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000), 4.

[14] Ellen Neuborne and Kathleen Kerwin, "Generation Y -- Today's Teens -- The Biggest Bulge Since the Boomers -- May Force Marketers to Toss Their Old Tricks," *Business Week,* 15 February 1999 [journal on-line]; available from http://www.businessweek.com/ 1999/99_07/b3616001.htm; Internet; accessed 15 November 2007.

[15] Jeffrey M. Jones, "Many Americans Reluctant to Support Their Child Joining Military, Nearly Half Would Suggest a Different Occupation," *The Gallup Poll,* 22 June 2005, [article on-line]; available from http://www.gallup.com/poll/17026/Many-Americans-Reluctant-Support-Their-Child-Joining-Military.aspx; Internet; accessed 22 November 2007.

[16] Harvey and Schoomaker, C-2.

[17] Ibid., 8.

[18] Frank Hoffman, "Bridging the Civil-Military Gap," *Armed Forces Journal* (December 2007): 19.

[19] Don M. Snider and Gayle L. Watkins, "The Future of Army Professionalism: A Need for Renewal and Redefinition," *Parameters* 30 (Autumn 2000): 8.

[20] Segal and Bourg, 706.

[21] Ibid., 710.

[22] George R. Mastroianni, "Occupations, Cultures, and Leadership in the Army and Air Force," *Parameters*, Winter 2005-06 [journal on-line]; available from http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/Parameters/05winter/mastroia.htm; Internet; accessed November 26, 2007.

[23] U.S. Army War College Strategic Leadership Course, *"Organizational Theory,"* (Carlisle Barracks: U.S. Army War College, 26 September 2007), 157.

[24] John A. Nagle, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife, Counterinsurgency Lesson from Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 215.

[25] U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Leadership*, Army FM 6-22 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, 31 August 1999), 2-7.

[26] Snider and Watkins, 10.

[27] Langston, 26-27.

[28] Hoffman, 19.

[29] Josh White, "Army off Target on Recruits -- Percentage of High School Graduates Drops to New Low," *Washington Post,* 23 January 2008 [newspaper on-line]; available from http://ebird.afis.mil/ebfiles/e20080123575027.html; Internet; accessed 23 January 2008.

[30] Segal and Bourg, 706.

[31] Ricks, 287.

[32] Mastroianni.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Richard D. Lewis, *When Cultures Collide* (Boston: Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 1996), 179-86.

[35] Leonard Wong, "Why Professionals Fight: Combat Motivation in the Iraq War," in Lloyd J. Matthews, ed., "The Future of the Army Profession, wd ed., rev. and exp. (Boston: McGraw-Hill Custom Publishing, 2005), 505.

[36] Lydia Saad, "Military Again Tops 'Confidence in Institutions' List, Ratings of the president, Congress, and the Supreme Court are all down," The Gallup Poll, 1 June 2005, [article on-line]; available from Internet; http://www.gallup.com/poll/16555/Military-Again-Tops-Confidence-Institutions-List.aspx; accessed 1 December 2007.

[37] Snider and Watkins, 10.

[38] Hoffman, 19-20.

[39] Peter A. Gudmundsson, "America's Upper Classes Have Gone AWOL," *Christian Science Monitor,* 8 January2008, [newspaper on-line]; available from http://ebird.afis.mil/ebfiles/e20080108571889.html; Internet; accessed 8 January 2008.

[40] Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, Remarks as Delivered at Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS, Monday, 26 November 2007, available from http://www.defenselink.mil/ speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1199; Internet, accessed 1 December 2007.

[41] Halloran, 9.

[42] Center for Disease Control, "Six Critical Health Behaviors," 13 November 2007 [study on-line]; available from http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/healthtopics/; Internet; accessed 13 November 2007

[43] Dennis M. Murphy and James F. White, "Propaganda: Can a Word Decide a War?" *Parameters* 37 (Autumn 2007): 25.

[44] Segal and Bourg, 705.

[45] Ibid., 706.

[46] Ibid., 707.

[47] Charles C. Moskos and John Sibley Butler, *All That We Can Be, Black Leadership and Racial Integration the Army Way* (New York: Basic Books, 1996), xiii.

[48] BG David A. Fastabend and Mr. Robert H. Simpson, "Adapt or Die, The Imperative for a Culture of Innovation in the United States Army" in the U.S. Army War College AY 2008 Strategic Thinking Course (Carlisle Barracks: U.S. Army War College AY 2008 Strategic Thinking Course), 148.

[49] Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline,The Art and Practice of The Learning Organization* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 3.

[50] Sun Tzu, *The Art of War* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 84.